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The Effect of Demographics on the Implementation of the Principal Walkthrough

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The Effect of Demographics on the Implementation of the Principal Walkthrough

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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Jason A. Marx has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the **Ed.D.** during this **Spring Semester 2019**.

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Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to research how school and principal demographics influence a principal's implementation of the walkthrough process. Principals from New Jersey were administered a survey to provide insight into how they implement the walkthrough process in their schools. The findings suggest that socioeconomic status and level of principal experience have no influence on how walkthroughs are implemented; however, the findings also suggest that level of principal experience does have an impact on whether or not principals share the results of walkthroughs with teachers.

Keywords: principal, instructional leadership, principal walkthrough, district factor group, principal experience, feedback.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
Table of Figures	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Context of the Problem.....	1
Conceptual Framework.....	2
Problem Statement	5
Purpose of the Study	5
Significance of the Study.....	5
Null Hypotheses	7
Limitations.....	7
Definition of Terms	8
Organization of the Study.....	9
Introduction	10
Historical Perspectives on School Leadership	10
Shift to Instructional Leadership	13
Theoretical Framework	14
Walkthroughs	17
Impact of Walkthroughs on Student Achievement	19
Impact of Walkthroughs on Teacher Self-efficacy	20
Impact of Walkthroughs on Teacher Practice	21
Walkthrough Models	22
Downey Walkthrough Model.....	23
Data-in-a-day	24
Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) Process	24
Learning Walk Routine.....	25
Look 2 Learning.....	26
McREL Power Walkthrough.....	26
Instructional Rounds in Education.....	27
Walkthrough Next Steps	29
Summary.....	30
Synthesis of the Literature.....	31
Gap in the Literature	32
Chapter 3: Research Design	33
Introduction	33
Purpose of the Study	33
Design and Methods	35
Population and Sample.....	35
Instrumentation	36
Research Questions.....	38

Hypotheses	38
Researcher Bias	40
Summary.....	40
School and District Demographic Information	43
District Factor Groups	43
Size of the School District.....	44
School Grade Level	45
Principal Demographic Information.....	46
Principal Race/Ethnicity.....	46
Principal Gender.....	47
Principal Experience Level	47
Walkthrough Process Responses.....	48
Purpose for Conducting Walkthroughs.....	48
The Most Frequent Use of Walkthroughs.....	49
The Most Important Use of Walkthroughs	50
The Amount of Time for Each Walkthrough	51
Aggregation of Walkthroughs into District Reports	52
Requirement to Engage in Walkthroughs	53
Frequency of Walkthroughs.....	53
Prior Notification of Walkthroughs	54
Sharing of the Results with Teachers.....	55
Walkthrough Results as a Basis for Teacher Evaluations	55
Data Results for Research Question 2.....	59
Data Results for Research Question 3.....	61
Limitations.....	62
Summary.....	62
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Further Study	64
Summary of the Problem.....	64
Design of the Study.....	65
Major Findings	66
Conceptual and Theoretical Framework Synthesis	69
Recommendations for Policy.....	71
Recommendations for Practice.....	74
Future Research	77
References	79
Appendix A: Survey Questions.....	85
Appendix B: IRB Letter.....	88

Table of Figures

TABLE 1: VARIABLES DEFINED	38
TABLE 2: DISTRICT FACTOR GROUPS	44
TABLE 3: SIZE OF DISTRICT	45
TABLE 4: SCHOOL GRADE LEVEL	46
TABLE 5: PRINCIPAL RACE/ETHNICITY	47
TABLE 6: PRINCIPAL GENDER	48
TABLE 7: PRINCIPAL EXPERIENCE LEVEL	48
TABLE 8: PURPOSE FOR CONDUCTING WALKTHROUGHS	50
TABLE 9: THE MOST FREQUENT USE OF WALKTHROUGHS	50
TABLE 10: THE MOST IMPORTANT USE OF WALKTHROUGHS	51
TABLE 11: THE AMOUNT OF TIME FOR EACH WALKTHROUGH	52
TABLE 12: AGGREGATION OF WALKTHROUGHS INTO DISTRICT REPORTS	52
TABLE 13: REQUIREMENT TO ENGAGE IN WALKTHROUGHS	53
TABLE 14: FREQUENCY OF WALKTHROUGHS	54
TABLE 15: PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF WALKTHROUGHS	54
TABLE 16: SHARING OF THE RESULTS WITH TEACHERS	55
TABLE 17: WALKTHROUGH RESULTS AS A BASIS FOR TEACHER EVALUATIONS.....	56
TABLE 18: CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS OF DISTRICT FACTOR GROUP (DFG) AND THE MOST IMPORTANT USE OF THE WALKTHROUGH PROCESS	57
TABLE 19: CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS OF LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AS A PRINCIPAL AND THE MOST IMPORTANT USE OF THE WALKTHROUGH PROCESS	59
TABLE 20: CROSS-TABULATION ANALYSIS OF LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AS A PRINCIPAL AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY SHARE THE RESULTS OF WALKTHROUGHS WITH TEACHERS.....	62

Chapter 1: Introduction

Context of the Problem

With the adoption of the AchieveNJ initiative in 2013, the state of New Jersey looked to improve the educator-evaluation system through a focus on teaching, leading and growing (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). The goal was to combine effective teaching with instructional leadership to positively impact student achievement (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). This initiative combined professional practice scores with student performance on state and school assessments to calculate the educator's yearly summative rating. Accountability for student performance does not rest solely with the teacher, but rests equally with the school principal.

The AchieveNJ initiative utilizes multiple measures to assess the effectiveness of instructional leaders. School principals are evaluated based on two primary components: principal practice and student achievement. The student achievement component accounts for 50% of a principal's performance evaluation; 10% is based on the average of teacher student growth objectives (SGO); 30% is based on the median student growth percentile (mSGP); while the remaining 10% is based on student achievement goals (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015).

In this era of high-stakes testing, school principals must possess the skills and knowledge to promote effective teaching and learning; they must be instructional leaders (O'Donnell & White, 2005). It is this idea of instructional leadership that has shifted the focus of principals from the school as a whole to the classroom and what is taking place in each individual classroom. One method that school principals utilize to determine what is taking place in the

classroom and to demonstrate their capacity as instructional leaders is the classroom walkthrough.

Conceptual Framework

An integral part of being an instructional leader is the ability to prioritize the time in classrooms focusing on instruction (Finkel, 2012). This idea of being visible and among one's staff members did not originate in the field of education. This idea originated in the corporate world with William Hewlett and David Packard in the 1970s when they started a practice called management by wandering around (MBWA) in their company, Hewlett-Packard. The goal of MBWA was to have company leaders go out into the workplace and talk to employees, work with them, ask questions and help support them if needed (Frase & Hertzal, 1990). Leaders should be spending at least 50% of their time in the field working with others (Frase & Hertzal, 1990). Through MBWA, leaders are supposed to walk among the employees with a purpose, to communicate, build morale, empower others and support the organization in its goal of achieving excellence (Frase & Hertzal, 1990).

Frase and Hertzal took the concept of MBWA and applied it to school leadership. Effective schools need a positive culture that is built on fostering trusting relationships between teachers and school leaders. Frase and Hertzal stress the importance of four building blocks of excellence when applying MBWA to schools: caring, trust, openness and strong instructional leadership (Frase & Hertzal, 1990; Schön, 1988). A caring relationship demonstrates to teachers that school leaders are open to listening to them and available to provide support. Spending time in their classrooms is meant to show that school leaders care enough to take the time to support them in improving their professional practice (Frase & Hertzal, 1990). Teachers need to maintain a level of confidence in their school leader. As a school leader visits various classrooms, this

concept of trust is so important. Teachers need to have trust that the school leader will be supportive of them when they walk into their classrooms. The concept of trust is what makes an evaluative visit different from a walkthrough for most teachers. A teacher must trust in the principal that the walkthrough is being used to support them and not being used as a facet of their formal evaluation. It is up to the school leader to foster this level of trust. When conducting a class visit, the leader must leave their own personal bias at the door and be open to teachers being innovative or teaching in a manner different from how the supervisor might expect things to be done. Teachers need to believe that the school leader is open to new ideas and values their involvement in improving the school (Frase & Hertz, 1990). It is up to the school leader to foster this school climate. Effective schools are built on the foundation of effective leadership, and it is through this concept of MBWA that school leaders are able to demonstrate the value they place on learning and high achievement (Frase & Hertz, 1990). Effective school leaders cannot remain static in their professional practice; they need to be committed to improving their professional practice by staying up-to-date on the latest educational research in the areas of teaching, learning and school leadership (Frase & Hertz, 1990). It is through these actions that school leaders are able to demonstrate to teachers that they are the instructional leaders of the school and an asset to improving student learning (Price, 2012).

Walkthroughs are brief, frequent, unannounced classroom visits that are focused on gathering data regarding the educational practices in the classroom (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). While the purpose of conducting a walkthrough may differ from visit to visit, the school leader has the opportunity to gather information from the walkthrough on various areas that may include instructional strategies, implementation of curriculum and standards, lesson objectives, student learning, level of student engagement, classroom resources and level of cognitive

demand (Kachur et al., 2010). These short classroom visits are a means of collecting evidence from the classroom to assess and guide school-improvement efforts (David, 2008). Although there are numerous variations in how walkthroughs are utilized, the basic idea of a walkthrough is that it is a short, focused, informal, non-evaluative classroom observation by the principal with the end goal of improving student achievement (Kachur et al., 2010). Principals may utilize walkthroughs as a means of entering classrooms and gathering data, but many instructional leaders take different paths in their effort to improve student achievement. It is in these different paths that principals may choose different focuses or purposes for visiting classrooms.

Ginsberg and Murphy (2002) cite the following reasons for a school leader to conduct a walkthrough: assessing the school climate, becoming familiar with teacher instructional practices, becoming familiar with the curriculum, assessing the level of student engagement, gathering data on student achievement and student motivation, and establishing themselves as instructional leaders of the school. Downey et al. (2004) identify additional reasons for conducting a walkthrough. They conclude that a school leader should conduct walkthroughs to identify areas of need for professional development, assess how staff development is impacting teaching, support teacher instruction, assess school operations and increase the leader's own professional practice as an observer and instructional coach for teachers. Kachur, Stout and Edwards (2010) identified the following as areas that walkthroughs can improve: "teacher instructional practices, implementation of curricular initiatives, assessment techniques, student behavior, student learning activities, classroom environment and classroom management" (Kachur et al., 2010). The variation in the purposes of walkthroughs is not the only area of ambiguity. The form a walkthrough takes in regards to frequency and length also varies from principal to principal. Due to such a wide variability between the form and purpose of

walkthroughs, it is important to investigate how principals utilize walkthroughs in their respective school settings.

Problem Statement

One problem when comparing how different schools implement the walkthrough process is that there is no consistent approach on how best to utilize a walkthrough to improve instructional practice. Schools differ in regards to the form and purpose of a walkthrough or class visit. In addition, when comparing different schools, what might be impactful for one school may not work for another (Lemons & Helsing, 2009). While most instructional leaders utilize walkthroughs to improve student achievement, there is no agreed-upon focus to achieve this end. This problem may be addressed by researching the different forms a walkthrough can take and looking at the different purposes principals have for conducting walkthroughs. While there is a lack of consistency in the form and purpose of walkthroughs, this analysis will look at whether the perceived variability becomes more consistent when we compare schools with similar demographics and principal demographics.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine if the use of principal walkthroughs is influenced by the demographic characteristics of both the school and the principal. The study will utilize a survey to determine how principals from diverse school settings implement the walkthrough process in their schools. In fulfilling this purpose, the researcher examined (1) principals' beliefs regarding the most important use of the walkthrough process, (2) the amount of time for each walkthrough, (3) the frequency of walkthroughs, (4) school and district demographics and (5) principal demographics.

Significance of the Study

While the literature indicates how walkthroughs should be utilized and what to look for in the classroom, there is limited information about how the demographics of a school influence how walkthroughs are actually conducted. There is no one-size-fits-all walkthrough method for every school and district across the country. While the end goal of improving teaching and learning may be the same for all instructional leaders, there are different ways of achieving this end. The actual implementation of the walkthrough process in schools may not consistently lead to an improvement in teaching and learning due in large part to the diversity in school settings and the variation in which the walkthrough process is implemented by principals.

The variation in the implementation of the principal walkthrough has led to inconsistent results in the improvement of teaching and learning across schools (Lemons & Helsing, 2009). Principals may conduct walkthroughs simply to comply with district initiatives and still fail to work collaboratively with teachers to improve instructional practice (DeWitt, 2016). A principal may walk into a classroom without ever discussing with the teacher what they are looking for and what the focus of the walkthrough is (DeWitt, 2016). In some schools, the level of feedback is ineffective or in some cases not shared with teachers (DeWitt, 2016). This study attempts to fill the gap in the literature by examining how school and principal demographics impact how walkthroughs are used and what form they take in a variety of settings. This study will help guide principals to utilize walkthroughs based on their particular school's demographic setting.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers?

Null Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1: A school's socioeconomic status has no statistically significant association with a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough.

Null Hypothesis 2: A principal's level of administrative experience has no statistically significant association with their purpose for conducting a walkthrough.

Null Hypothesis 3: A principal's level of administrative experience has no statistically significant association with whether or not they share the results of walkthroughs with teachers.

Limitations

I will collect data using a voluntary survey through an online survey website. The survey was limited to New Jersey public-school principals. One limitation in utilizing this instrument is the assumption that all principals surveyed would answer honestly and accurately. Another limitation in regards to the survey instrument is the assumption that all principals surveyed would have common definitions for the walkthrough terms utilized in the survey.

Delimitations

The design of the study was limited to surveying only principals and their views on the walkthrough process. The study will not survey other building-level or district-level leaders who utilize walkthroughs as an aspect of their jobs. The rationale behind limiting the study to school-

based principals is to isolate how principals view the purpose of walkthroughs in their respective schools. A district-level leader may have a different focus or methodology when it comes to conducting a walkthrough, especially since their purpose may be different from that of a building-level principal. The study was limited to the walkthrough process and did not include formal classroom observations utilized for the purpose of evaluation.

Definition of Terms

Principal: An individual charged with leading a school.

Instructional Leader: A type of school leader who possess the skills and knowledge to promote effective teaching and learning.

Instructional Practices: Activities utilized in the classroom to promote student learning.

Classroom Walkthrough: A brief, unannounced observation of a classroom.

Feedback: Written or oral information provided to the teacher after a classroom observation.

Best Practice: An agreed-upon behavior or action that is deemed to be the best form of a given action.

District Factor Group: An approximate measure of a community's relative socioeconomic status.

Student Growth Objective: An average of every teacher's SGO rating for the year.

Student Growth Percentile: A measure of how much a student improves on their state test performance from one year to the next compared to students across the state with a similar score history.

PARCC: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers.

Administrator Goals: Aligned goals that are set by principals in consultation with their chief school administrators each year.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 will provide a review of the literature relating to the topic of this study. The literature examines the development of school leadership through history and how the shift to instructional leadership led to the implementation of walkthroughs in schools. The literature review will present how the concept of walkthroughs transitioned from the corporate world to schools and how different school walkthrough models and “look fors” developed from the initial corporate concept. The literature review will conclude by examining the impact of walkthroughs on student achievement, teacher efficacy and teacher practice. Chapter 3 will detail the type of research methodology to be utilized in this study and the appropriateness of the research design. Chapter 4 will present the data collection, the data collection method and analysis of the data. Chapter 5 will present the results, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature relating to the topic of this study. It will examine relevant research within the areas of (1) historical perspectives, (2) walkthroughs and (3) walkthroughs and outcomes. This study will examine how school leaders from diverse school settings utilize the walkthrough process to initiate change and school improvement. This study will also examine different walkthrough models, how school leaders structure their walkthroughs and how school leaders align the purpose of an individual walkthrough to their overarching goal of improving student achievement.

Historical Perspectives on School Leadership

The supervisory role of the principal has changed throughout the history of education. The principal has gone from being an authoritarian leader during the colonial period to a building manager during the late 19th century to the present day where a principal is expected to be an instructional leader (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). The beginnings of school leadership can be traced to the colonial period (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). The school leaders of the colonial period marked the beginning of school oversight and set the supervisory focus for future school leaders. During the colonial period, the role of supervisors was to select teachers for their schools and then conduct periodic school inspections to assess teacher and student performance (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The role of the supervisor during the colonial period was focused on enforcing local codes and customs and the supervisor typically did not come from the field of education (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The term “principal” did not originate until the late 1800s after the development of the common school. During this period it was common for the terms “head teacher,” “headmaster” and eventually “principal” to be used to identify the designated

person responsible for the day-to-day management of the school (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The duties associated with this position were focused on maintaining discipline, creating rules for both students and teachers, maintaining the school building, scheduling classes and assigning pupils to specific grade levels (Spain, Drummon & Goodlad, 1956). During the early 20th century, developments in the field of psychology led to a greater focus on the idea of teaching and learning within schools and resulted in the division of labor and a greater specialization within the school (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The school leader was focused on standardizing the educational program, developing greater efficiency within the classroom and making instructional activities more routine (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The purpose of classroom visits by school leaders gradually shifted from maintaining the order of the school to focusing on what was actually occurring within the teachers' classrooms in regards to teaching and learning (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011).

The concept of conducting classroom visits or walkthroughs began during the early 20th century and was viewed as a way to monitor teachers. This period was marked by an effort not to improve teaching and learning but to make the curriculum standard for all students and to ensure teachers were maintaining this level of standardization. The greatest shift in the way schools were being led began in the mid-20th century when supervision shifted from the idea of inspecting what was happening in the classrooms to assisting teachers through classroom observations (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). This foundational shift required school leaders to develop a culture emphasizing a supportive relationship with teachers around teaching and learning (Franseth, 1955). The role of the principal went from being a school manager to the beginnings of what will become a common feature of the role of the principal, that of an instructional leader.

When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1 into orbit, shockwaves were sent through the educational community in the United States, leading to major educational reforms and federal involvement in educational programs (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The educational reforms brought about after Sputnik 1 led to school leaders becoming curriculum specialists with the goal of increasing rigor in the areas of mathematics and science (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). The role of the supervisor after this historical event led to a curricular focus for school leadership. The primary goal of school leaders was to analyze the existing curriculum and ensure that teachers had the instructional materials needed to transition their practices to be more in line with the new educational reforms of the period.

The 1970s and 1980s began the period of clinical supervision of teachers. The primary goal was to conduct classroom observations in order to obtain data regarding teaching and learning and to use this data to diagnose and treat instructional issues (Beach & Reinhart, 2000). This model of supervision was focused on looking at specific instructional behaviors to determine how these behaviors were impacting student learning. The concept of classroom walkthroughs is a specific technique utilized to gather evidence about teaching and learning. The task of gathering data in classrooms is one element of supervision that is prevalent in our current educational landscape. The major focus has shifted from checking in on what is going on in classrooms to the idea of being able to gather observational data in order to support and solve instructional problems in collaboration with the teacher (Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011).

Schools need instructional leaders who have the ability not only to gather the data, but also to determine what can be done with this data once it is gathered within the classroom. It is not enough to merely be visible in classrooms to be considered an instructional leader; a true instructional leader has to know what to look for in the classroom and have the ability take the

walkthrough data and make specific recommendations to improve both teaching and learning within their school.

Shift to Instructional Leadership

The effectiveness of a principal has shifted from how well they manage the building to whether they have the ability to positively impact teaching and learning within their school (Finkel, 2012). Instructional leadership is difficult to observe and measure because there are a multitude of perceptions of what is required to be an instructional leader (Ing, 2010).

Instructional leaders need to have the knowledge of instructional best practices and be able to align those practices to the existing curriculum. Instructional leadership is a blend of several different tasks primarily focused on the supervision of classroom instruction, curriculum development and staff development (Blase & Blase, 1999).

In addition to utilizing these tasks to facilitate instructional change, an instructional leader must incorporate collegial classroom observations to provide a level of support, guidance and encouragement to teachers who are being asked to change (Schon, 1988). In the past, the focus of an instructional leader was to inspect what is going on in the classroom and to judge whether it was effective or not (Sheppard, 1996). More recently, there has been greater value placed on creating relationships to support teachers and to coach them in the areas of teaching and learning in order to create teachers who have the ability to reflect on their instructional practice (Schon, 1988). Principals may not have a direct effect on student achievement, but research supports the idea that principals have an indirect impact on instruction through teacher coaching and reflective dialogue with teachers (Crum & Sherman, 2008). Principals are held accountable for the achievement of all students within the school (Rhinehart, Short, Short & Eckley, 1998). The level of effectiveness of a school principal is primarily based on their ability

to ensure a certain level of academic achievement on the part of the students. While principals are not the ones standing in front of the classroom providing instruction to students, they have a primary responsibility to ensure that teachers are following the curriculum and utilizing proven instructional strategies and supports to positively impact teaching and learning within the classroom. Principals have to promote a school culture in which staff are comfortable having conversations about teaching and learning (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002). It is through the utilization of classroom walkthroughs that principals are able to not only ensure teachers are following the approved curriculum, but also begin conversations with teachers about teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Theoretical Framework

Educational leaders need to have a firm grasp of change theory in order to bring about meaningful organizational improvements (Evans, Thorton & Usinger, 2012). The mere act of walking into a classroom will not improve a school organization. A school leader needs to have knowledge of change theory to guide them in their quest to improve teaching and learning within their school (Evans, Thorton, & Usinger, 2012).

When first initiating change in schools, leaders must determine what type of change is needed to achieve the desired school improvements. Meyer, Brooks and Goes (1990) and Fullan (2001) believe that change in schools can be broken down into two distinct categories: first-order change and second-order change. In the case of first-order change, small modifications are made to the system so as not to disrupt the entire system. The leader is making small changes that may improve various aspects of the school. Second-order change involves fundamentally altering the properties of the system. In second-order change, the structure of the school is disrupted and individuals are forced to do their jobs differently. In many cases, school staff may have a new set

of goals that are guiding the organization towards school improvement. Before initiating change, a leader must determine the type of change the organization needs and the type of change the staff are prepared for. If a leader does not consider this, it may lead to conflict and resistance throughout the change process. This may lead to an initial change that is not sustainable and difficult to maintain without having the full support of the people within the organization.

Lewin's (1947) work in the area of change theory outlines the struggle individuals go through when change is being attempted. Whether one is seeking to change an individual or a group, the change process is a "profound psychological dynamic process that involved painful unlearning without loss of ego identity and difficult relearning as one cognitively attempted to restructure one's thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and attitudes" (Schein, 1999). Lewin's change model is broken down into three stages: the unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Lewin, 1947). Human behavior is based on a large force field of driving and restraining forces; when a driving force towards change is initiated, the human mind pushes back with an equal counterforce to maintain the equilibrium (Schein, 1999; Burnes 2004). In order for the equilibrium to be moved to accept the change, one needs to remove the restraining forces that are already established in the human behavior (Schein, 1999; Burnes 2004). These restraining forces are difficult to remove because they are typically embedded in the human behavior because of personal psychological defenses or group norms (Schein, 1999). Once the restraining forces are removed, the group or individual will be more accepting of a change. The refreezing process entails taking this newly accepted change and making it a part of one's behavior and personality. If this is not done, the individual or group will unlearn what they have just learned (Schein, 1999). When initiating individual change, it is important to allow the individual to have some input into the change process; this will allow the individual to pick solutions or methods that are aligned to

their personality and less likely to be impacted by a restraining force (Lewin, 1947). When initiating group change, one has to identify the group norms and work towards changing the norms of the group as a whole so that the group is more accepting of changing the old behavior. Schein (1999) finds that “one of the most powerful sources of motivation to work through all of the frustrations involved in managing change is to have to report regularly on progress to ‘teammates’ and to the faculty.” This sharing of progress allows people to share what they are experiencing as a result of this change as well as reassess and recalibrate their actions towards making the change effective (Schein, 1999).

Senge’s (2006) theoretical framework for learning organizations is based on the idea that members of an organization develop structures, which are designed to facilitate learning and adaptability to change. The learning organization framework is based on five components: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and systems thinking (Senge, 2006). Personal mastery is the idea that school leaders within an organization seek to support the professional development of all of their employees (Senge, 2006). This is typically done through the evaluation system as a means of setting short- and long-term professional development goals. In order for personal mastery to work, teachers need to share the belief that when school leaders visit their classrooms during observations or walkthroughs, their intention is to improve teacher practice. Once teachers share this idea, then school leaders and teachers can work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning (Schein, 1999). Mental models are the beliefs that individuals within the school hold about concepts and events that may impact behavior (Senge, 2006; Schein, 1999). Mental models need to be aligned to the school’s reality. If there is misalignment, then organizations will not be able to move forward with change (Schein, 1999). It is through mental models that schools are able to envision where they are and where they would like to be.

Mental models in conjunction with a shared vision are critical for sustaining change. A shared vision is vital in determining where a school wants to go as an organization. For school leaders, collaborating with teachers and establishing a shared vision will increase the level of commitment to the vision. This shared vision will flow through the entire organization and will guide their work on a daily basis (Schein, 1999). Team learning is the means to work together to create the results the school organization desires (Schein, 1999). Most decisions made by schools are made by teams of teachers and administrators (Senge, 2006). It is important for teams to collaborate well together in working towards the shared vision for the school. It is through team learning that a school is able to capitalize on the strengths of its members to work towards the school's vision (Senge, 2006). The final component of learning organizations is the ability to see that every decision within the organization impacts other elements within the organization; Senge (2006) refers to this as systems thinking. Systems thinking helps leaders and school staff predict how decisions made within the organization will impact other areas of the organization. All facets of the learning organization framework are interdependent on one another and can work together in initiating and sustaining effective change (Schein, 1990).

Walkthroughs

For the purpose of this study, school leaders are implementing the walkthrough process to initiate change in the areas of teaching and learning. There is a clear distinction between when a school leader walks into a classroom to conduct a formal evaluation compared to an informal walkthrough. Formal evaluations inherently bring with them anxiety for teachers. Walkthroughs, on the other hand, are intended to support teachers, not evaluate them. Walkthroughs are brief, frequent, unannounced classroom visits that are focused on gathering data regarding educational practices in the classroom (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2013). A walkthrough is not intended to

merely make the school leader visible in the classroom, but rather is an opportunity for feedback and further discussion regarding teacher practices and student learning (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2013). During the era when principals acted as building managers, an administrator's reason for visiting a teacher's classroom was either to conduct a formal teacher evaluation or to inspect the classroom structures and the proper implementation of curriculum (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). Walkthroughs have attempted to shift the purpose of classroom visits from evaluating teachers to supporting teachers in their instruction of students (Skretta, 2007). While the purpose of conducting a walkthrough may differ from visit to visit, the school leader has the opportunity to gather information from the walkthrough that includes instructional strategies, implementation of curriculum and standards, lesson objectives, assessments of student learning, level of student engagement, classroom resources and the level of cognitive demand (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2013). These short classroom visits are a means of collecting evidence from the classroom to assess school-improvement efforts (David, 2008), which may take the form of staff professional development.

There are many benefits to making visiting classrooms a common practice. From an instructional standpoint, the more time principals spend in classrooms, the more informed they are in regards to the quality of teaching and level of learning that are taking place in their school. These frequent visits will help principals target which teachers may be in need of additional support to improve their teacher practice (Downey & Frase, 2001). Walkthroughs allow principals to assess the impact of professional development in the classroom and to assess new educational initiatives (Downey & Frase, 2001). Administrators are able to determine if teachers are actually implementing what they have learned from the professional development that has been offered through the school or district. This information can guide further professional

development and approaches moving forward. If teachers are being asked to implement a new educational program or initiative, walkthroughs are an opportunity to determine if teachers need further support in implementing the program successfully. Spending more time in classrooms also has two other valuable functions: it decreases the level of teacher anxiety when teachers see their principal enter their classrooms, and provides a more accurate account of teacher practice (Downey & Frase, 2001). Teachers and students will come to expect classroom visits and they will become part of the norm. The principal's presence in the classroom will not influence what is going on in the classroom and will result in a more accurate account of what typically is occurring in the classroom when the principal is not conducting a classroom visit. If a principal is present in a teacher's classroom on a regular basis, the teacher may be more open to feedback from the principal or more likely to engage with them in a conversation about their teacher practice. By engaging in the walkthrough process, teachers will be receiving feedback from the frequent visits to the classroom. This practice will support a principal in their observations and post-observation discussions because, having been a frequent visitor to a teacher's room, they will be able to provide a more accurate and valid assessment of the teacher's professional practice (Downey & Frase, 2001).

Impact of Walkthroughs on Student Achievement

Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013) conducted a study of 120 school principals in the Miami-Dade County Public School system, which consisted of observers shadowing each principal for an entire school day. A protocol was utilized that listed 50 different tasks that were to be coded based on the principals' actions. The data set was then linked to student performance data and principal interviews. The findings indicated that principals spend an average of 12.7% of their time on instruction-related activities, 5.4% of their time conducting walkthroughs, 2.1%

of their time developing the educational program, 1.8% of their time conducting evaluations and 0.5% of their time coaching teachers (Grissom et al., 2013). The researchers found that principals' time spent on instruction did not predict student achievement growth on state assessments (Grissom et al., 2013). The study did, however, find that specific instruction functions did predict student achievement growth, namely, time spent on coaching, evaluation and developing the educational program of the school (Grissom et al., 2013). The act of visiting classrooms alone is not enough to initiate school improvement; the true impact on teaching and learning lies in what comes after the data has been gathered from the walkthrough and the actual coaching of teachers begins. It is important to note that principals in this study spent such a small proportion of their time devoted to coaching and evaluating teachers (only 2.3%), and yet this study proved the importance of these tasks as they relate to student achievement growth. There is a disparity between the amount of time spent conducting walkthroughs and the time spent coaching teachers. The question remains: are principals conducting walkthroughs for compliance reasons or actually as a means of supporting teacher practice?

Impact of Walkthroughs on Teacher Self-efficacy

The idea of self-efficacy focuses on one's confidence in their ability to perform at a given level (Bandura, 1994). Confidence in one's professional practice impacts how people feel, think, and how they motivate themselves (Bandura, 1994). The notion of self-efficacy has been shown to have an impact on student achievement directly as well as how teachers feel about their work in the classroom (Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Teachers who have high self-efficacy believe in their ability to teach students at a high level, and this helps to promote student learning (Downey, 2004). Self-efficacy has been shown to impact teachers' beliefs in how they perform in the classroom, but research has also shown that it positively impacts student

achievement in both reading and writing (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000). Frequent classroom walkthroughs have been shown to have an impact on teacher self-efficacy (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). While they do not influence student learning directly, classroom visits have the ability to increase a teacher's belief that they can perform their role effectively. The mere practice of visiting classrooms has an impact on teacher self-efficacy and building a teacher's ability to face challenges (Bandura, 1994). Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy create challenging goals for themselves and have the confidence they can control difficult situations and recover quickly if they do not succeed at first (Bandura, 1994). It is this ability to persevere and keep striving to support student learning that makes students perform well in classrooms. Walkthroughs play a more important role than merely gathering data about teacher practice; they also play a role in shaping school culture and positively impacting the climate so it is conducive for teaching and learning (Ing, 2010; Ziegler, 2006).

Impact of Walkthroughs on Teacher Practice

Walkthroughs and class visits have become requirements for school leaders in most schools. However, not all principals have the training or professional capacity to provide the level of feedback to teachers needed to improve teacher practice (Cudeiro & Nelsen, 2009). Some principals who do not have the expertise to know what to look for in classrooms allocate their time to other areas where they feel more comfortable (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002). When a principal conducts a walkthrough they can gather plenty of data, but without having a level of expertise in teaching and learning, this data may be worthless to them (Deboer & Hinojosa, 2012). Principals conduct evaluations and walkthroughs to determine if teachers are doing the right things in their classes, but there is very little support for principals to determine if what they are doing with this information will actually lead to school improvement (Cervone & Martinez-

Miller, 2007). In many schools, professional development is allocated only to teachers for improving their professional practice. By ignoring the professional development of school leaders, we are missing an opportunity to strengthen administrators' capacities to improve instruction (Spanneut, Tobin & Ayers, 2012). The purpose of conducting walkthroughs and visiting classrooms is to support teacher practice, but spending more time in classrooms also expands the bank of instructional strategies that administrators have at their disposal. The more time administrators spend in classrooms, the more experience they have to share some of these strategies and techniques with other teachers moving forward (Downey & Frase, 2001). There is an expectation that administrators learn to do the work by doing the work (City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009), but there is a need to ensure that the work they are doing is the right work.

While it is clear that walkthroughs have numerous benefits—from improving school culture to raising a teacher's self-efficacy—the main goal for all administrators when walking into a classroom is improving teacher practice. All school stakeholders understand that high-quality teaching results in higher levels of student achievement (Downey, 2004). School leaders utilize teacher walkthroughs as a means of ensuring that all teachers know what high-quality instruction looks like and how to make the improvements needed to reach this level in their professional practice. The more a school leader visits classrooms and focuses on curriculum and instruction during these visits, the more positive the impact on classroom instruction (Teddle, Kirby & Stringfield, 1989).

Walkthrough Models

The numerous walkthrough models differ in their approaches to visiting classrooms. The time spent in the room typically varies, but nearly all models agree that the visit should be short in duration. While in the classroom, each model focuses on different “look-fors” when gathering

evidence. The major difference in the walkthrough approaches is in how the feedback is delivered to the staff. Some walkthrough models focus on individual feedback and coaching, while others focus on providing a school with trends across the entire school or multiple classrooms without providing feedback to specific teachers regarding their instructional practices. The school leader's purpose for visiting the classroom determines the method by which feedback is delivered. If the purpose is to support teacher practice and coach individual teachers, then providing individual feedback and engaging in reflective conversations would be the most beneficial method for all parties involved. If the school leader is using a walkthrough to assess the implementation of professional development or to determine how a curriculum initiative is being implemented in the school, then a general overview of the trends from a school-wide walkthrough would be the best method. Regardless of the method used, the value of a walkthrough model should not be based on what is observed, but rather on how the model addresses what the school leader does with this information once it has been gathered (Grissom, Loeb & Master, 2013).

Downey Walkthrough Model

The Downey walkthrough model created by Carolyn Downey, who worked as a school administrator during the 1960s, is an approach to visiting classrooms consisting of five basic factors that aims to encourage principals and teachers to work together in a collaborative and reflective manner (Downey, Steffy, English, Frase & Poston, Jr., 2004). Downey's approach to walkthroughs consists of short but focused classroom visits that do not exceed three minutes in length. The goal of the walkthrough is to collect a small amount of data that might be used to support a conversation about teacher practice. The walkthrough participants consist of principals, coaches, mentors and/or teachers. The Downey model focuses on five look-fors during the

classroom visit: (1) student orientation to work, (2) curricular decisions, (3) instructional decisions, (4) walk the walls and (5) health and safety conditions (Downey, 2004). The feedback is provided directly to the teacher through the use of reflective questions and subsequent conversations. The goal of these conversations is to improve the choices teachers make as they teach future lessons independent of the principal (Downey, 2004). Downey's model hopes to create teachers who are self-reflective and have the ability to analyze their own teaching and make future modifications and improvements to their lessons on their own (Downey, 2004).

Data-in-a-day

The purpose of the data-in-a-day walkthrough model is to provide a short self-study opportunity for a school. The principals and teachers gather and report data about themes that students and staff have identified as important for school improvement (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). The observers consist of students, parents and teachers of the school. The walkthrough looks-fors consist of themes that have been identified by the school based on their school-improvement plan or professional development focus (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). The data-in-a-day model ensures that all of the classrooms are visited on a given day and looks for specific examples of evidence that align with the school's pre-identified themes. School-wide feedback is provided directly to the school at the end of the day's visit.

Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI) Process

The instructional practices inventory (IPI) process is a walkthrough model developed by Valentine and Painter (2018) that focuses on increasing student engagement through meaningful learning opportunities. The IPI process develops school-wide data profiles of student engagement based on three broad categories of engagement: student-engaged instruction, teacher-directed instruction and disengagement (Painter & Valentine, 2018). The broad

categories are further broken down into six coding categories that observers look for during the classroom visits: (1) student actively engaged in learning, (2) student learning conversations, (3) teacher-led instruction, (4) student work with teacher engaged, (5) student work with teacher not engaged and (6) complete disengagement (Painter & Valentine, 2018). The observers are teacher leaders and school administrators. Observations consist of spending one day visiting all classrooms in the school for one to three minutes long. Observations are structured to ensure all classrooms are visited multiple times throughout the day. The feedback is provided through student-engagement profiles. These profiles include an opportunity for the staff to work collaboratively to analyze and redesign the school's instructional practices.

Learning Walk Routine

The learning walk routine was developed by the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning and is used to gather data about teaching and learning to make informed decisions about professional development (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). The learning walk routine is also used as a tool to assess the implementation and effectiveness of professional development as seen in the classrooms. The observers are administrators and teacher leaders and they spend between five and twenty-five minutes in several classrooms. The look-fors consist of nine principles of learning: (1) organizing for effort, (2) accountable talk, (3) clear expectations, (4) learning as apprenticeship, (5) socializing intelligence, (6) fair and credible evaluations, (7) academic rigor in a thinking curriculum, (8) self-management of learning and (9) recognition of accomplishment (Institute for Learning, 2018). All feedback is sent in the form of a letter from the school principal to the entire staff. The letter consists of a summary of patterns observed and questions for the staff to reflect upon. The letter also highlights future professional development opportunities and the time of the next scheduled learning walk.

Look 2 Learning

The goal of the look 2 learning walkthrough model is to improve student achievement by generating and analyzing data on the level of academic rigor, relevance and student engagement (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). The observers consist of principals, instructional coaches and team leaders. The looks-fors focus on student learning, engagement and student work. All data is focused on student learning and not on teaching (Antonetti, Garver & Garver, 2007). The look 2 learning model focuses on the following data points during a classroom visit: (1) high-impact leading indicators of learning, (2) analysis of curriculum alignment, (3) qualities of student work, (4) learner engagement and (5) the instructional cycle (Antonetti, Garver & Garver, 2007). All classroom visits are four minutes in length. Feedback is provided anonymously in the form of data summarized in a graph.

McREL Power Walkthrough

The McREL power walkthrough model focuses on the extent teachers are utilizing the program's *Classroom Instruction That Works* strategies, the integration of technology in the classroom and the levels of Bloom's taxonomy as seen in student tasks (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2010). The observers consist of school and district administrators and teachers. Look-fors are related to the nine strategies of *Classroom Instruction That Works*: (1) identifying similarities and differences, (2) summarizing and note taking, (3) reinforcing effort and providing recognition, (4) homework and practice, (5) non-linguistic representations, (6) cooperative learning, (7) setting objectives and providing feedback, (8) generating and testing hypotheses and (9) cues, questions and advance organizers (Marzano, Pickering & Pollack, 2001). Feedback is provided directly to teachers and affords school leaders the opportunity to

coach teachers in order to help them achieve higher levels of performance through reflective questions and post-observation conversations.

Instructional Rounds in Education

The instructional rounds approach is an instructional improvement process that is based on using group observations to facilitate system-wide improvements in the areas of teaching and learning (City, 2009). Network participants, who include central office administrators, school administrators and teachers, conduct group observations focused on what is found within the “instructional core” (City, 2009). The instructional core is the relationship between the teacher and student in the presence of instructional content (City, 2009). Network participants visit classrooms to collect observation data that is focused on what the teacher is doing and saying, what the students are doing and saying and the instructional tasks. All observation data is aligned to a “problem of practice” that has been identified by the host school (City, 2009). The problem of practice is a focus area within the instructional core that the school has identified as an area in need of improvement that will make a difference in student learning (City, 2009). Once the observation teams have collected the data from the classrooms, they come together to discuss the evidence gathered from the classroom visits. The network participants describe what was seen in the classroom, analyze the data to identify patterns and predict what students are learning based on the evidence gathered (City, 2009). The network then collaborates to create recommendations or next steps for the school or district to implement to address the district’s problem of practice.

The instructional rounds approach is a collaborative learning approach that develops a common language and a shared definition of effective teaching and learning (Fowler-Finn, 2006). Through the instructional rounds process, schools and districts learn what needs to be done to support instruction from an organizational point of view while also providing clarity in

regards to effective instructional practices (Teitel, 2009). The collaborative learning environment created by an instructional rounds network fosters opportunities to discuss instruction without evaluating the specific teacher. It is through the next level of work that schools and districts are able to guide a school's professional development in the area of teacher practice. A majority of the next level of work is focused on providing opportunities for staff professional development.

Walkthrough Look-fors

When a school leader walks into a classroom during a walkthrough, they are expected to be the instructional leader of the building and efficiently gather evidence to determine if what is going on in the classroom has a positive impact on student learning. The school leader is expected to have a complete grasp of instructional practices and school curriculum and be able to take all of this information and make a determination if student learning is taking place in the classroom and on what cognitive level (Shernoff, 2013). The leader is then expected to provide feedback to the teacher based on what was seen in the classroom. This feedback is supposed to support the teacher in the process of reflecting on their own teaching (Skretta, 2007). It is through reflecting on their professional practice that school leaders hope to form a common language around what good instruction looks like and how to assess student learning within a lesson.

Because instructional leaders have an indirect impact on student achievement, it is important to recognize that walkthroughs should focus not only on the teaching in the classroom, but on student learning as well (Skretta, 2007). The purpose of walkthroughs is to enhance the school's collective understanding of instruction and to shift from improving instructional issues in teacher practice to focusing on what the students are doing in the classroom (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007). City, Elmore, Fiarman and Teitel (2009) emphasize the importance of

the “instructional core” in knowing what to look for during class visits and how best to intervene in the instructional process (City, 2009). The instructional core is defined as the relationship between the teacher and the student in the presence of the content (City et al., 2009). When visiting a classroom, there are only three ways to positively impact student learning: increase the knowledge and skills of the teacher, increase the cognitive demand of the content or change the student’s role in the instructional process (City et al., 2009). If principals are not addressing one of these three elements when conducting walkthroughs, they are not going to see any improvements in the areas of teaching and learning (City et al., 2009). School leaders need to enhance their professional practice so they can not only be able to decipher different levels of quality classroom instruction, but also be able to focus walkthroughs on identifying the effects of instruction on student learning (Cervone & Martinez-Miller, 2007). School leaders need to focus their walkthroughs on gathering evidence within the instructional core (City, 2009). A school leader’s influence in the classroom is not seen in the actual leadership practices they utilize, such as walkthroughs, but rather in how these practices impact teacher knowledge and skill as well as the level of student engagement (City et al., 2009). It is vital that all walkthrough feedback is specific and targeted towards improving student learning. When providing teacher feedback or engaging in a coaching opportunity, it is important to develop a shared understanding of how specific instructional techniques and practices impact student learning within the classroom.

Walkthrough Next Steps

Conducting a walkthrough is merely the beginning of the school improvement process, and the gathering of data is only a small part of this process. The true measure of an instructional leader is how the leader analyzes the data to determine the next level of work needed to support school improvement. Walkthroughs serve many purposes, but the act of conducting a

walkthrough itself aims to gather data. What each school leader does with the evidence gathered is truly where the school improvement efforts begin. Without the next steps in the process, a walkthrough is merely a visit to a classroom and may fulfill no real purpose other than to show that the school leader is visible and cares about what is going on in the school. Research shows that feedback, teacher coaching and professional development are critical next steps in the walkthrough process to bring about instructional improvements (Ing, 2010). Principals need to be able to look at an instructional practice and articulate to teachers the impact the practice is having on student learning (Taylor, Backor & Gordon, 2015). It is clear that principals need a level of professional development in improving their capacities to use the information gathered from walkthroughs to address how to improve teaching and learning. (Ing, 2010).

Summary

From the onset of public education, principals were charged with overseeing teachers in schools to determine if what was being done in schools was in the best interest of the education of children. While the role of the leader within the school has changed over time, the primary focus of the school has not changed: students attend school to learn, and teachers are the ones responsible for delivering an education to the children. The evolution of the role of the principal from a manager to an instructional leader has brought with it this concept of visiting classrooms for the purpose of improving teacher practice and student learning. While research has shown that there are numerous ways to conduct walkthroughs, the key takeaway is that all walkthroughs, regardless of the method utilized, are meant to support teachers in their professional practice. While walkthroughs have been primarily used to impact professional practice, research has shown that walkthroughs do more than provide an opportunity for the principal to visit classrooms and support teachers. Walkthroughs have been shown to improve

school climate and create a culture for professional learning, develop a sense of teacher self-efficacy and improve teacher practice. A school leader does not directly impact student achievement, but through their focus on what goes on in the classroom, school leaders have the ability to raise both teacher performance in the classroom and positively impact student achievement. This concept of conducting walkthroughs and supporting teachers with their instruction is one of the most vital things a school leader can do to support teaching and learning. While school leaders have many roles they must fill every day, there is none that is more important than ensuring that students are placed in front of effective teachers who are providing them with the best possible education. The primary goal of all schools is to educate children, and we cannot overlook the important role of professional learning in student education.

Synthesis of the Literature

The summary analysis of the literature review consisted of 45 references, which can be categorized into theoretical sources and empirical studies. The references were broken down as follows: 32 theoretical sources and 13 empirical studies. The majority of the research on walkthroughs was theoretical in nature. The empirical studies primarily focused on instructional leadership (Blase & Blase, 1999; Taylor, Kirby & Gordon, 2015; Sheppard, 1996; Rhinehart, Short, Short & Eckley 1998), improving instructional practices (Ing, 2010), supervision (Grissom, Loeb & Master, 2013; Franseth, 1955), facilitating high achievement (Crum & Sherman, 2008, Teddlie, Kirby & Stringfield, 1989) and increasing staff efficacy (Chester & Beausin, 1996; Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992).

Two empirical studies in particular influenced the scope of this research project. Sheppard's (1996) research on the variance in instructional leadership between elementary and secondary schools in part influenced the direction of this study. From Sheppard's notion that

different school settings can influence school leaders' approaches to instructional leadership came the idea that if instructional leadership differs in different school settings, then school demographics might also affect how the walkthrough process is implemented. Grissom, Loeb and Masters's (2013) research on effective instructional time use for school leaders brought to light the idea that, while walkthroughs do not have a positive impact on school achievement, coaching does. The researchers concluded that the walkthrough process was implemented differently across school settings and these varied walkthrough approaches were associated with different results. It is the combination of these insights that led to the idea of researching the walkthrough process and how it may be implemented differently in different school settings based on school demographics. After reviewing the literature, the major question that remained was whether school and principal demographics impact the purpose for conducting walkthroughs and how the walkthrough process is implemented.

Gap in the Literature

This study is being conducted in order to determine if there is a relationship between the motivation for conducting a walkthrough and the demographic characteristics of the school and the principal. While studies have been conducted to compare different walkthrough methods and how they are perceived both by leaders and teachers, there is a lack of research when it comes to looking at demographics and how walkthroughs are used in those specific demographic school settings (Grissom, 2013). This study will extend the existing literature on walkthroughs and create new knowledge in this area with the hope of guiding similar school districts in how best to utilize walkthroughs to impact school change.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

The school principal is expected to be the instructional leader of the school. An instructional leader's impact on teaching and learning can be measured in different ways by different schools and districts, but it is typically measured through student performance on state and district assessments (Ing, 2010; Finkel, 2012; Rhinhart, Short, Short & Eckley, 1998). While the literature has shown how the role of a principal has shifted from a building manager to an instructional leader, the literature has also shown that one of the primary means of being an instructional leader is by visiting classrooms to support teaching and learning (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000; Marzano, Frontier & Livingston, 2011). Walkthroughs, regardless of the form that they take, have become an expected aspect of the principal's daily routine. While walkthroughs have been shown to have no direct impact on teaching and learning, principals still use them as a means of gathering instructional data on how to provide feedback and coaching to teachers, which helps support teaching and learning (Crum & Sherman, 2008) and provide feedback and coaching to teachers (David, 2008, Downey & Frase, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

As described in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether a relationship exists between a school's demographics and the approach a principal takes in implementing the walkthrough process. The study will also investigate whether a relationship exists between how a principal implements the walkthrough process and the demographic of the school principal. The purpose of this study was to determine if differences exist among principals from demographically diverse schools in how they implement the walkthrough process in their schools.

One of the primary variables this study will look to examine is the demographics of the districts as categorized by the District Factor Groups (DFGs) of the state of New Jersey. The DFGs were developed by the state of New Jersey to compare student performance on state assessments across demographically similar school districts (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). The DFGs represent the measure of a community's relative socioeconomic status and are calculated based on six factors, with J representing the highest socioeconomic level and A representing the lowest. The DFGs consist of groups A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J. The New Jersey DFGs are calculated based on the following factors: (1) percentage of adults with no high school diploma, (2) percentage of adults with some college education, (3) occupational status, (4) unemployment rate, (5) percentage of individuals in poverty and (6) median family income (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). The DFGs have been used by the state of New Jersey to analyze student performance on state assessments, classify a district as an Abbott district and provide state aid for education (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). In focusing on this variable, this study will be examining whether a school's socioeconomic status influences how principals in those schools implement the walkthrough process. Data supports the notion that as you progress through DFGs A to J, student performance increases (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2004). While all principals, regardless of the DFG they work in, are faced with different sets of challenges, those who work in schools where student performance is lower have a greater concern with student performance because it can negatively impact their principal performance evaluations. This study will address whether there is a greater focus on using walkthroughs and striving to be an instructional leader in a school where student performance is lower.

The methodology of this study will be divided into the following five sections: (1) design and methods, (2) population and sample, (3) instrumentation, (4) data collection and (5) data analysis procedures.

Design and Methods

This study will be descriptive in nature and utilize a survey design to gather walkthrough and demographic data from school principals. The goal of the study is to use a quantitative design to investigate the relationship between a principal's implementation of the walkthrough process and the demographics of both the school and the principal conducting the walkthrough. The study will utilize a survey design to compare a relatively large sample of New Jersey school principals. This research design will utilize data gathered from web-based surveys that were previously distributed through e-mail to New Jersey school principals as part of a study request from the Seton Hall University Superintendent Study Council in March of 2015. Survey collection was administered by the website Survey Monkey. The survey was cross-sectional and measured principal perceptions of the walkthrough process from different schools across the state of New Jersey. A survey was selected to answer the study's research questions because it enabled the researcher to determine how principals implement the walkthrough process across a high number of schools.

Population and Sample

While school administrators can be district- or school-based leaders, the primary focus of this study is the school principal. Principals are the primary instructional leaders of schools and the ones who frequent teacher classrooms the most. The sample for this study will consist of 214 New Jersey principals across DFGs A through J. The rationale for including New Jersey principals across all DFGs is that it provides a more complete picture of the walkthrough-

implementation process across all socioeconomic levels in New Jersey schools. Principals will be examined from the elementary, middle and high-school levels. By including all levels of schools in New Jersey, the study can investigate whether there are any differences in how the walkthrough process is implemented across school levels. The principals will be from schools that have populations ranging from less than 500 students to over 3000 students. The study chose to include all sizes of school districts in order to ensure a high response rate by not limiting the study to a particular district size. The sample of principals will include principals who have differing levels of experience, from principals in their first or second year to those who have 10 or more years of experience as a principal. By including principals across experience levels, the study will be able to see how the role of instructional leadership changes for those who have been in the role for longer periods of time as compared to those who are newly appointed principals.

Instrumentation

In this study, the analysis will compare each principal's survey responses regarding their implementation of the walkthrough process in their school to demographic characteristics of both the principal and the school setting where the principal conducts the walkthrough. The survey consisted of six prompts pertaining to demographics (1-6 in Table 1) and 10 prompts pertaining to the walkthrough process (7-16 in Table 1).

Table 1

Variables Defined

Variable Number	Variable	Description	Measurement
1	DFG	District Factor Group	Ordinal
2	District Size	District Size	Ordinal
3	Grade Level	Grade Levels Served	Nominal
4	Race/Ethnicity	Principal Race/Ethnicity	Nominal
5	Gender	Principal Gender	Nominal
6	Years as a Principal	Principal Experience Level	Ordinal
7	Purpose	Purpose for Conducting the Walkthrough	Nominal
8	Frequent Use	Most Frequent Use of the Walkthrough	Nominal
9	Important Use	Most Important Use of the Walkthrough	Nominal
10	Amount of Time	Length of a Typical Walkthrough	Ordinal
11	Frequency	Frequency of Walkthroughs	Ordinal
12	Shared District	Is Walkthrough Data Shared with the District?	Nominal
13	Requirement	Are Walkthroughs a Requirement?	Nominal
14	Prior Notification	Do Teachers Receive Prior Notification of Walkthroughs?	Nominal
15	Shared Teacher	Are Walkthrough Results Shared with Teachers?	Nominal
16	Evaluate	Are Walkthrough Results Used to Evaluate Teachers?	Nominal

The survey instrument was created by a Seton Hall University professor with the intention that the responses to the survey questions would provide a clear representation of how principals implement the walkthrough process in their schools. The study is dependent on self-reported data from an online-administered survey. The study will assume all participating principals responded to the survey in an honest and accurate manner. One issue of reliability in conducting a survey is that respondents may answer based on what they think the researcher wants to hear, rather than what their honest response is. Additional limitations faced in conducting survey research are the potential for low response rates, incomplete responses on the survey, inflexible design in the structure of the existing survey and a lack of details due to an inability to ask follow-up questions. The survey was administered in a confidential manner so as to address some of the limitations in survey research.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer three research questions: (1) is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough? (2) Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough? (3) Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers?

Hypotheses

The study led to the following hypotheses: (1) A school's socioeconomic status has no statistically significant association with a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough. (2) A principal's level of administrative experience has no statistically significant association with that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough. (3) A principal's level of administrative

experience has no statistically significant association with whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers.

Data Collection

The Seton Hall University Superintendent Study Council requested a study to be conducted to research how school principals conduct walkthroughs in their schools. A professor from Seton Hall University conducted the principal walkthrough survey. All principals in this study were contacted individually and invited to participate through an e-mail seeking participation in a walkthrough study. All survey participants were provided notification of their intent to participate and their assurance of confidentiality. The number of participants included more than 200 principals from across the state of New Jersey. The survey was administered and responses were collected through the website Survey Monkey. In order to keep the sample random, all voluntary participants were included in the study. The Seton Hall professor reported back to the Seton Hall University Superintendent Study Council the data that was gathered through the survey, and all data from this survey currently resides in the public domain and has been made available for other researchers to engage in further research on the topic of walkthroughs.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were generated from each of the 18 survey questions. The descriptive statistics collected from the survey were summarized and analyzed based on the six demographic variables: (1) district factor group category, (2) district size, (3) grade levels served, (4) principal ethnicity, (5) principal gender and (6) principal experience level. The demographic data was analyzed using a cross-tabulation analysis to determine if each demographic variable had a statistically significant association with the school principal walkthrough survey responses.

The cross-tabulation analysis included the following walkthrough survey responses: (1) purpose for conducting the walkthrough, (2) most frequent use of the walkthrough, (3) most important use of the walkthrough, (4) length of a typical walkthrough and (5) frequency of walkthroughs. Cross-tabulation analysis was used as the form of statistical analysis because the survey produced ordinal, nominal and categorical responses. Missing data was addressed through a casewise deletion approach in order to maximize the amount of respondents included in each statistical analysis. A chi-square test for independence was used to assess the degree of association between categorical variables, and Cramer's V was used to determine the strength of the relationship between variables in order to answer the study's research questions.

Researcher Bias

The researcher is currently working as a school principal. In this role, the researcher has experience conducting walkthroughs as a principal as well as experience as a teacher receiving walkthroughs from administrators. The bias is limited in that there is no interaction between the researcher and the participants in the sample.

Summary

This study may provide insight into the walkthrough process and how it is used by principals in diverse school settings. The results of this study will deepen the conversation about how principals utilize walkthroughs in their specific schools. The goal of this study is to provide insight into how walkthroughs are used and whether demographics play a role in both how they are utilized and in what form. As we look at the association between demographics and the principals' use of walkthroughs, this study may provide principals with an opportunity to look at how principals from similar school settings use walkthroughs in their school and whether principals from similar demographic schools implement walkthroughs in the same manner. The

data from this study will be presented in Chapter 4 and will address the three research questions.

A summary and discussion of the findings along with conclusions, implications for practice and recommendations for future research will be presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

With the institution of AchieveNJ, school principals are emphasizing the importance of instructional leadership and utilizing classroom visits to impact teaching and learning. Instructional leadership has been shown to be instituted differently based on the grade level of the school setting (Sheppard, 1996). Classroom walkthroughs are a common method of demonstrating instructional leadership, and this study will seek to determine if walkthroughs are initiated differently based on the demographics of the district and the school principal.

The study utilized a survey that was electronically distributed to New Jersey school principals through e-mail during the months of March and April of 2014. The survey resulted in 214 survey responses returned. Of the 214 New Jersey school principals who started the survey, 40 principals completed the principal demographics portion of the survey, but did not complete the walkthrough process portion of the survey. The survey consisted of two parts. Part 1 was created to gather demographic information on the principal's school and district. Demographic information that was collected in part 1 of the survey from each principal respondent regarding their school and district included the following: the district factor group category, size of the district and grade levels served in the school. Demographic information that was collected in part 1 of the survey from each principal respondent regarding their background included the following: race/ethnicity, gender and number of years as a principal. The demographic information gathered from part 1 of the survey allowed the researcher to create a profile of both the principal and the school in the study. Part 2 was created to gather data to describe the use of the walkthrough process in the principal's school and district. Part 2 of the survey consisted of check box and multiple-choice responses to the survey questions. Survey responses were collected in part 2 of the survey from each principal respondent regarding the following aspects

of the walkthrough process: the purpose of the walkthrough process, the most frequent use of the walkthrough process, the most important use of the walkthrough process, the amount of time for each walkthrough, the frequency of walkthroughs, whether or not walkthroughs are a requirement of the district, whether or not teacher evaluations are based on walkthrough results, whether or not teachers receive prior notification of walkthroughs, whether or not walkthrough results are shared with teachers and whether or not information obtained from walkthroughs is aggregated into district reports. Findings from the study are presented in this chapter.

The guiding questions of this study were as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers?

School and District Demographic Information

The purpose of gathering demographic information regarding the school and district was to determine if the dependent variables of district factor group, size of the district and grade levels of the school influenced principals' approaches to implementing the walkthrough process in their schools.

District Factor Groups

Principals were asked to identify the district factor group category associated with their school district. The responses revealed that of the 204 principals who responded to this question

12 (5.9%) work in a school categorized by district factor group A, 14 (6.9%) work in a school categorized by district factor group B, 28 (13.7%) work in a school categorized by district factor group C/D, 20 (9.8%) work in a school categorized by district factor group D/E, 35 (17.2%) work in a school categorized by district factor group F/G, 25 (12.3%) work in a school categorized by district factor group G/H, 54 (26.5%) work in a school categorized by district factor group I, and 16 (7.8%) work in a school categorized by district factor group J. The data is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

District Factor Groups

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	A	12	5.6	5.9	5.9
	B	14	6.5	6.9	12.7
	C/D	28	13.0	13.7	26.5
	D/E	20	9.3	9.8	36.3
	F/G	35	16.3	17.2	53.4
	G/H	25	11.6	12.3	65.7
	I	54	25.1	26.5	92.2
	J	16	7.4	7.8	100.0
	Total	204	94.9	100.0	
Missing System		11	5.1		
Total		215	100.0		

Size of the School District

The size of the school district was the second variable addressed in the school district demographic portion of the survey. The responses revealed that of the 210 principals who responded to this question 25 (11.9%) are employed in a district with less than 500 students, 19 (9.0%) are employed in a district with 500 to 750 students, 21(10.0%) are employed in a district with 751 to 1,000 students, 19 (9.0%) are employed in a district with 1,001 to 1,500 students, 42

(20.0%) are employed in a district with 1,500 to 3,000 students, and 84 (40.0%) are employed in a district with more than 3,000 students. The data is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Size of District

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Less than 500 students	25	11.6	11.9	11.9
	500–750 students	19	8.8	9.0	21.0
	751–1,000 students	21	9.8	10.0	31.0
	1001–1,500 students	19	8.8	9.0	40.0
	1500–3,000 students	42	19.5	20.0	60.0
	More than 3,000 students	84	39.1	40.0	100.0
	Total	210	97.7	100.0	
Missing System		5	2.3		
Total		215	100.0		

School Grade Level

The grade level of the school was the third variable addressed in the school district demographic portion of the survey. The responses revealed that of the 202 principals who responded to this question 46 (22.8%) lead a school with a grade level span of K to 3, 116 (57.4%) lead a school with a grade level span of K to 6, 14 (6.9%) lead a school with a grade level span of K to 12, 23 (11.4%) lead a middle school, and 3 (1.5%) lead a high school. The data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

School Grade Level

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	K-3	46	21.4	22.8	22.8
	K-6	116	54.0	57.4	80.2
	K-12	14	6.5	6.9	87.1
	Middle School	23	10.7	11.4	98.5
	High School	3	1.4	1.5	100.0
	Total	202	94.0	100.0	
Missing System		13	6.0		
Total		215	100.0		

Principal Demographic Information

The purpose of gathering demographic information regarding principals was to determine if the dependent variables of race/ethnicity, gender and the number of years working as a principal influenced principals' approaches to implementing the walkthrough process in their schools.

Principal Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity was the first item addressed in the principal demographic portion of the survey. The responses revealed that of the 209 principals who responded to this question 171 (81.8%) were white, 15 (7.2%) were African-American, 11 (5.3%) were Hispanic, 1 (0.5%) was Asian, 0 (0.00%) were Native American, 1 (0.5%) described themselves as something other than the choices listed above, and 10 (4.8%) described themselves as bi-racial. The data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Principal Race/Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	White	171	79.5	81.8	81.8
	African-American	15	7.0	7.2	89.0
	Hispanic	11	5.1	5.3	94.3
	Asian	1	.5	.5	94.7
	Other	1	.5	.5	95.2
	Bi-Racial	10	4.7	4.8	100.0
	Total	209	97.2	100.0	
Missing System		6	2.8		
Total		215	100.0		

Principal Gender

Gender was the second variable addressed in the principal demographic portion of the survey. The responses revealed that of the 208 principals who responded to this question 109 (52.4%) were male and 99 (47.6%) were female. The data is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Principal Gender

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Male	109	50.7	52.4	52.4
	Female	99	46.0	47.6	100.0
	Total	208	96.7	100.0	
Missing System		7	3.3		
Total		215	100.0		

Principal Experience Level

The number of years in the role of principal was the third variable addressed in the principal demographic portion of the survey. The responses revealed that of the 212 principals who responded to this question 14 (6.60%) were in their first 2 years as a principal, 40 (18.9%) had 2 to 5 years of experience as a principal, 78 (36.8%) had 5 to 10 years of experience as a

principal, and 80 (37.7%) had more than 10 years of experience as a principal. The data is presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Principal Experience Level

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	1–2 years	14	6.5	6.6	6.6
	2–5 years	40	18.6	18.9	25.5
	5–10 years	78	36.3	36.8	62.3
	More than 10 years	80	37.2	37.7	100.0
	Total	212	98.6	100.0	
Missing System		3	1.4		
Total		215	100.0		

Walkthrough Process Responses

The purpose of gathering responses for the walkthrough portion of the survey was to gain a clearer understanding of how each school principal implements the walkthrough process in their school. The survey questions were developed to provide details into the most frequent use of the walkthrough process, the most important use of the walkthrough process, the amount of time for each walkthrough, the frequency of walkthroughs, whether or not walkthroughs are a requirement of the district, whether or not teacher evaluations are based on walkthrough results, whether or not teachers receive prior notification of walkthroughs, whether or not walkthrough results are shared with teachers and whether or not information obtained from walkthroughs is aggregated into district reports.

Purpose for Conducting Walkthroughs

The first walkthrough process question stated, “What purpose is the walkthrough process used for in your district? (Check all that apply.)” The responses revealed that of the 173 principals who responded to this question 134 (77.46%) selected “to evaluate teacher

instructional delivery,” 119 (68.79%) selected “to evaluate classroom climate,” 90 (52.02%) selected “to gather data for decision making,” 72 (41.62%) selected “to monitor student behavior,” 49 (28.32%) selected “to assess adherence to district policies,” 39 (22.54%) selected “other purposes not listed,” and 14 (8.09%) selected “to evaluate principal’s performance.” A total of 41 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Purpose for Conducting Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Valid Percentage
Valid	To evaluate teacher instructional delivery	134	77.46
	To monitor student behavior	72	41.62
	To evaluate classroom climate	119	68.79
	To assess adherence to district policies	49	28.32
	To gather data for decision making	90	52.02
	Other purposes not listed	39	22.54
	To evaluate principal’s performance	14	8.09
Total		173	100.0
Missing System		41	
Total		213	

The Most Frequent Use of Walkthroughs

The second walkthrough process question stated, “What is the most frequent use of the walkthrough process in your district? (Check only one.)” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 91 (52.0%) selected “to evaluate teacher instructional delivery,” 15 (8.6%) selected “to evaluate classroom climate,” 23 (13.1%) selected “to gather data for decision making,” 15 (8.6%) selected “other purposes not listed,” 4 (2.3%) selected “to monitor student behavior,” 2 (1.1%) selected “to assess adherence to district policies,” and 25

(11.6%) selected “multiple responses given.” A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

The Most Frequent Use of Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	To evaluate teacher instructional delivery	91	42.3	52.0	52.0
	To monitor student behavior	4	1.9	2.3	54.3
	To evaluate classroom climate	15	7.0	8.6	62.9
	To assess adherence to district policies	2	.9	1.1	64.0
	To gather data for decision making	23	10.7	13.1	77.1
	Other purposes not listed	15	7.0	8.6	85.7
	Multiple responses given	25	11.6	14.3	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

The Most Important Use of Walkthroughs

The third walkthrough process question stated, “What is the most important use of the walkthrough process in your district? (Check only one.)” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 96 (54.9%) selected “to evaluate teacher instructional delivery,” 27 (15.4%) selected “to gather data for decision making,” 18 (10.3%) selected “to evaluate classroom climate,” 17 (9.7%) selected “other purposes not listed,” 1 (0.6%) selected “to monitor student behavior,” 1 (0.6%) selected “to assess adherence to district policies,” and 15 (7.0%) selected “multiple responses given.” A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

The Most Important Use of Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	To evaluate teacher instructional delivery	96	44.7	54.9	54.9
	To monitor student behavior	1	.5	.6	55.4
	To evaluate classroom climate	18	8.4	10.3	65.7
	To assess adherence to district policies	1	.5	.6	66.3
	To gather data for decision making	27	12.6	15.4	81.7
	Other purposes not listed	17	7.9	9.7	91.4
	Multiple responses given	15	7.0	8.6	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

The Amount of Time for Each Walkthrough

The fourth walkthrough process question stated, “What is the amount of time for each walkthrough?” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 48 (27.4%) conducted walkthroughs that lasted more than five minutes, 53 (30.3%) conducted walkthroughs that lasted four to five minutes, 51 (29.1%) conducted walkthroughs that lasted two to three minutes, 19 (10.9%) conducted walkthroughs that lasted one to two minutes, and 4 (2.3%) conducted walkthroughs that lasted less than one minute. A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

The Amount of Time for Each Walkthrough

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Less than 1 minute	4	1.9	2.3	2.3
	1–2 minutes	19	8.8	10.9	13.1
	2–3 minutes	51	23.7	29.1	42.3
	4–5 minutes	53	24.7	30.3	72.6
	More than 5 minutes	48	22.3	27.4	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

Aggregation of Walkthroughs into District Reports

The fifth walkthrough process question stated, “Is information obtained from principal walkthroughs aggregated into district reports?” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 41 (23.4%) aggregate walkthroughs into district reports and 134 (76.6%) do not aggregate walkthroughs into district reports. A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Aggregation of Walkthroughs into District Reports

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	41	19.1	23.4	23.4
	No	134	62.3	76.6	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

Requirement to Engage in Walkthroughs

The sixth walkthrough process question stated, “As a principal are you required to engage in walkthroughs?” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 96 (54.9%) are required to engage in walkthroughs and 79 (45.1%) are not required to engage in walkthroughs. A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Requirement to Engage in Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	96	44.7	54.9	54.9
	No	79	36.7	45.1	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

Frequency of Walkthroughs

The seventh walkthrough process question stated, “How frequently do you engage in the walkthrough process?” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 58 (33.1%) do not conduct walkthroughs on a prescribed frequency, 26 (14.9%) conduct walkthroughs at least once a day, 15 (8.6%) conduct walkthroughs at least twice a day, 18 (10.3%) conduct walkthroughs more than twice a day, 18 (10.3%) conduct walkthroughs at least once a week, 15 (8.6%) conduct walkthroughs at least twice a week, and 20 (11.4%) conduct walkthroughs more than twice a week. A total of 40 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Frequency of Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	At least once a day	26	12.1	14.9	14.9
	At least twice a day	20	9.3	11.4	26.3
	More than twice a day	18	8.4	10.3	36.6
	At least once a week	18	8.4	10.3	46.9
	At least twice a week	15	7.0	8.6	55.4
	More than twice a week	20	9.3	11.4	66.9
	No prescribed frequency	58	27.0	33.1	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

Prior Notification of Walkthroughs

The eighth walkthrough process question stated, “Do you announce in advance when a walkthrough will be conducted?” The responses revealed that of the 175 principals who responded to this question 6 (3.4%) announce in advance when they will conduct a walkthrough and 169 (96.6%) do not announce in advance when they will conduct a walkthrough. The data is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Prior Notification of Walkthroughs

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	6	2.8	3.4	3.4
	No	169	78.6	96.6	100.0
	Total	175	81.4	100.0	
Missing System		40	18.6		
Total		215	100.0		

Sharing of the Results with Teachers

The ninth walkthrough process question stated, “Do you share the results with teachers after completion of a walkthrough?” The responses revealed that of the 172 principals who responded to this question 125 (72.7%) share the walkthrough results with teachers and 47 (27.3%) do not share the walkthrough results with teachers. A total of 43 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Sharing of the Results with Teachers

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	125	58.1	72.7	72.7
	No	47	21.9	27.3	100.0
	Total	172	80.0	100.0	
Missing System		43	20.0		
Total		215	100.0		

Walkthrough Results as a Basis for Teacher Evaluations

The tenth walkthrough process question stated, “Are teacher evaluations based on the results of walkthroughs?” The responses revealed that of the 174 principals who responded to this question 26 (14.9%) use walkthrough results as a basis for teacher evaluations and 148 (85.1%) do not use walkthrough results as a basis for teacher evaluations. A total of 41 principals skipped this question. The data is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Walkthrough Results as a Basis for Teacher Evaluations

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	26	12.1	14.9	14.9
	No	148	68.8	85.1	100.0
	Total	174	80.9	100.0	
Missing System		41	19.1		
Total		215	100.0		

Data Results for Research Question 1

The research question was: is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough? The null hypothesis stated: a school's socioeconomic status has no statistically significant association with a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough.

To investigate whether or not school principals from different district factor groups differ in their purposes for conducting walkthroughs, a cross-tabulation and Pearson chi-square test were conducted. Assumptions were checked and were not met. 81.3% (39 cells) had an expected count of less than five. The minimum expected count was 0.07. Category values were not simplified through recoding because there was no justifiable reason to combine district factor groups and the purpose for conducting a walkthrough. As Table 18 shows, the cross-tabulation indicates that the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough, regardless of district factor group, was to evaluate instructional delivery. All district factor groups selected this as the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough. District factor group B had the highest percentage of principals (75%) and district factor group F/G had the lowest percentage (46.7%) of principals who selected "to evaluate instructional delivery" as the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough. Since all district factor groups selected this as the most important

purpose for conducting a walkthrough, it is important to look at which purpose was selected as the next most important. “To gather data for decision making” and “to evaluate classroom climate” were each selected by three district factor groups as the next most important purposes for conducting a walkthrough. The Pearson chi-square results indicated that the assumptions were not met and the reported chi-square test resulted in a non-significant result ($X^2=39.335$, $df=35$, $N=167$, $p=.282$). Principals are not more likely to conduct a walkthrough for a specific purpose based on the district factor group of their school.

Table 18

Cross-tabulation Analysis of District Factor Group (DFG) and the Most Important Use of the Walkthrough Process

		Most Important Use of the Walkthrough Process							
		To evaluate teacher instructional delivery	To evaluate classroom climate	To assess adherence to district policies	To gather data for decision making	Other purposes not listed above	Multiple responses given	Total	
DFG	A	Count	6	2	1	1	0	2	12
		% within DFG	50.0%	16.7%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	16.7%	100.0%
	B	Count	9	0	0	0	1	2	12
		% within DFG	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	16.7%	100.0%
	C/D	Count	12	3	0	4	1	2	22
		% within DFG	54.5%	13.6%	0.0%	18.2%	4.5%	9.1%	100.0%
	D/E	Count	9	3	0	2	2	0	16
		% within DFG	56.3%	18.8%	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%
	F/G	Count	14	2	0	7	6	1	30
		% within DFG	46.7%	6.7%	0.0%	23.3%	20.0%	3.3%	100.0%
	G/H	Count	11	4	0	1	1	2	19
		% within DFG	57.9%	21.1%	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%	10.5%	100.0%
	I	Count	22	4	0	9	4	3	42
		% within DFG	52.4%	9.5%	0.0%	21.4%	9.5%	7.1%	100.0%
	J	Count	8	0	0	2	1	3	14
		% within DFG	57.1%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	7.1%	21.4%	100.0%
	Total	Count	91	18	1	26	16	15	167
		% within DFG	54.5%	10.8%	0.6%	15.6%	9.6%	9.0%	100.0%

Data Results for Research Question 2

The research question was: is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough? The null hypothesis stated: a principal's level of administrative experience has no statistically significant association with that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough.

To investigate whether or not school principals with different levels of administrative experience as principals differ in their purposes for conducting walkthroughs, a cross-tabulation and Pearson chi-square test were conducted. Assumptions were checked and were not met. 42.9% (nine cells) had an expected count of less than five. The minimum expected count was 0.25. Category values were not simplified through recoding because there was no justifiable reason to combine the principal experience levels. The category values of years as a principal were recoded in this statistical analysis to be consistent across all analyses conducted in the study. The values of one to two years, two to five years, five to ten years and more than ten years were recoded into one to five years, five to ten years and ten or more years. The justification for recoding the one-to-two-years value and the two-to-five-years value into one to five years was that this span of years typically represents the non-tenured years of a school principal. As Table 19 shows, the cross-tabulation indicates that the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough, regardless of years of administrative experience as a principal, was to evaluate instructional delivery. Five to ten years had the highest percentage (59.1%) and one to five years had the lowest percentage (44.2%). Since all principals, regardless of years of experience as a principal, selected "to evaluate instructional delivery" as the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough, it is important to look at which purpose was selected as the next most important. "To gather data for decision making" was selected by principals with one to five years

and more than ten years of experience as a principal as the next most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough, while principals with five to ten years of administrative experience as a principal selected “to evaluate classroom climate” as the next most important purpose. The Pearson chi-square results indicated that the assumptions were not met and the reported chi-square test resulted in a non-significant result ($X^2=14.839$, $df=12$, $N=174$, $p=.250$). Principals are not more likely to conduct a walkthrough for a specific purpose based on the level of administrative experience of the school principal.

Table 19

Cross-tabulation Analysis of Level of Administrative Experience as a Principal and the Most Important Use of the Walkthrough Process

			Most Important Use of Walkthrough Process							Total
			To evaluate teacher instructional delivery	To monitor student behavior	To evaluate classroom climate	To assess adherence to district policies	To gather data for decision making	Other purposes not listed above	Multiple responses given	
Years as a Principal	1–5 Years	Count	19	0	3	1	8	5	7	43
		% within Years as a Principal	44.2%	0.0%	7.0%	2.3%	18.6%	11.6%	16.3%	100.0%
	5–10 Years	Count	39	0	10	0	8	4	5	66
		% within Years as a Principal	59.1%	0.0%	15.2%	0.0%	12.1%	6.1%	7.6%	100.0%
	More than 10 Years	Count	37	1	5	0	11	8	3	65
		% within Years as a Principal	56.9%	1.5%	7.7%	0.0%	16.9%	12.3%	4.6%	100.0%
Total	Count		95	1	18	1	27	17	15	174
	% within Years as a Principal		54.6%	0.6%	10.3%	0.6%	15.5%	9.8%	8.6%	100.0%

Data Results for Research Question 3

The research question was: is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of the walkthroughs with teachers? The null hypothesis stated: a principal's level of administrative experience has no statistically significant association with whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers.

To investigate if school principals with different levels of administrative experience differ in whether or not they share the results of walkthroughs with teachers, a cross-tabulation and Pearson chi-square test were conducted. Assumptions were checked and met. As Table 20 shows, the cross-tabulation indicates that most principals shared the results of walkthroughs with teachers. Principals with more years of administrative experience as a principal were far more likely to share the walkthrough results with teachers than those with less years of administrative experience. Principals with more than ten years of administrative experience had the highest percentage of sharing walkthrough results with teachers (84.1%), and principals with one to five years of administrative experience had the lowest percentage of sharing walkthrough results with teachers (65.1%). The Pearson chi-square results indicated that the assumptions were met and the reported chi-square test resulted in a significant result ($X^2=6.763$, $df=2$, $N=171$, $p=.034$). The Cramer's V (0.199) indicated an approximate significance level of 0.034. This indicated that there is a moderately strong association between principals' administrative experience levels and whether or not they share the results of walkthroughs with teachers. As the number of years of administrative experience increased, the likelihood of sharing the walkthrough results with teachers increased.

Table 20

Cross-tabulation Analysis of Level of Administrative Experience as a Principal and Whether or Not Principals Share the Results of Walkthroughs with Teachers

			Results Shared with Teachers		
			Yes	No	Total
Years as a Principal	1–5 Years	Count	28	15	43
		% within Years as a Principal	65.1%	34.9%	100.0%
	5–10 Years	Count	43	22	65
		% within Years as a Principal	66.2%	33.8%	100.0%
	More than 10 Years	Count	53	10	63
		% within Years as a Principal	84.1%	15.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	124	47	171	
	% within Years as a Principal	72.5%	27.5%	100.0%	

Limitations

It is appropriate to recognize some limitations to this study. These limitations are as follows:

1. The survey was designed without an opportunity to ask follow-up questions or receive open-ended responses.
2. Data was gathered from a random sample of all levels of K–12 education, which may limit the usefulness of the study since it encompasses all levels of elementary and secondary education.

Summary

This chapter showed how the district factor groups and principal experience levels influenced how school principals implement the walkthrough process in their school districts. A

cross-tabulation and Pearson chi-square test were used to determine the relationship between district factor groups and the most important purpose for conducting walkthroughs; years of experience as a principal and the most important purpose for conducting walkthroughs; and years of experience as a principal and whether or not principals share walkthrough results with teachers. The results indicated principals were not more likely to select a specific walkthrough purpose as the most important based on the district factor group of the school or based on their level of experience as a school principal. The results also indicated that as the number of years of experience as a principal increased, the likelihood of sharing the walkthrough results with teachers increased. The knowledge gained by this study will contribute to the current body of literature dealing with demographics and walkthroughs. This study will provide additional knowledge to school principals regarding how best to implement the walkthrough process in their districts to best serve the purpose of their individual schools. Chapter 5 will include an interpretation of the data, the conclusions of the study and recommendations for policy, practice and further study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Further Study

Summary of the Problem

Since the adoption of the AchieveNJ initiative in 2013, school leaders in New Jersey have been held accountable to act as instructional leaders and to have a positive impact on student achievement. Student achievement, measured by student growth objectives, student growth percentiles and administrator goals, accounts for 50% of a principal's summative evaluation. With student achievement accounting for such a high percentage of a principal's summative evaluation, principals have been charged with finding ways to improve teaching and learning like never before. It is a shared belief that in order to be instructional leaders principals have to visit classrooms, not only to gather data on teaching and learning but also to utilize the data to determine the next steps needed to positively impact student achievement (Finkel, 2012). Principals typically visit classrooms through formal observations or to conduct classroom walkthroughs.

The existing literature on walkthroughs states that walkthroughs are brief, frequent, unannounced classroom visits that are focused on gathering data regarding educational practices in the classroom (Kachur, Stout & Edwards, 2013). There is, however, a wide variability in the literature in regards to how walkthroughs are actually implemented in schools. One problem for principals trying to use walkthroughs to impact teaching and learning, is that there is no consistent, agreed-upon approach for how best to utilize a classroom walkthrough to improve instructional practices. When comparing how different schools implement the walkthrough process, the form of a walkthrough and the purpose for conducting a walkthrough differ from school to school and sometimes from leader to leader within the same school. A school principal attempting to improve teaching and learning through the implementation of the walkthrough

process is left with many different walkthrough methods to choose from, and there is little research identifying how the walkthrough process can be best implemented to improve teaching and learning.

The purpose of this study was to determine if principals' implementation of the walkthrough process is influenced by the demographic characteristics of both the school and the principal. The study looked at whether the perceived variability of how walkthroughs are implemented in schools becomes more consistent when compared to schools with similar school and principal demographics. This study hopes to guide principals in implementing walkthroughs in their schools based on the walkthrough methods that principals in similar school settings utilize to improve teaching and learning.

Design of the Study

This study utilized survey data gathered from a previous study conducted at the request of the Seton Hall University Superintendent Study Council in March of 2015. The study was descriptive in nature and utilized a survey design to gather walkthrough and demographic data from 214 New Jersey school principals. A total of 18 questions were included on the survey: 6 questions dealt strictly with school and principal demographics, while 12 questions gathered information about how principals implement the walkthrough process in their schools.

This study sought to answer three research questions:

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers?

Major Findings

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between a school's socioeconomic status and a principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Principals selected one of eight district factor groups in defining their school's district demographics and responded to a survey question asking them to identify the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough in their school. There were seven purposes listed in the survey, including to evaluate teacher instructional delivery, to gather data for decision making, to monitor student behavior, to evaluate principal's performance, to evaluate classroom climate, to assess adherence to district policies and other purposes not listed. There was no statistically significant association between the district factor group and most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough variables. These findings suggest that principals are not more likely to select a specific walkthrough purpose as the most important based on the district factor group or socioeconomic status of the school community.

Despite the lack of a statistical association between district factor group and the purpose for conducting a walkthrough, it is important to note this study determined that regardless of the socioeconomic makeup of their schools, principals prioritize walkthroughs as an opportunity to evaluate teacher instructional delivery and classroom climate and to gather data for decision making. Most principals, regardless of their district factor group, believe walkthroughs are to be used to evaluate teachers in some form. Despite research indicating that walkthroughs are meant to be informal and non-evaluative (Downey, et al., 2004), the principals in this study have

indicated that they use walkthroughs as an additional means to evaluate teachers. When walkthroughs are used primarily to evaluate teachers, this may have an unintended impact on the school culture and the school's receptiveness to change. Research indicates that when walkthroughs are used to support and coach teachers, through a more reflective as opposed to evaluative approach, a positive school culture develops, enhancing the comfort level of teachers and helping overcome reform obstacles (Freedman & LaFleur, 2003). By continuing to utilize walkthroughs as a tool for evaluation, principals are missing an opportunity to use walkthroughs to positively impact school culture and create a school climate that is open and receptive to change.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and that principal's purpose for conducting a walkthrough?

Principals selected one of three experience levels in defining their demographic and responded to a survey question asking them to identify the most important purpose for conducting a walkthrough in their school. There were 43 principals with under five years of experience, 66 principals with five to ten years of experience and 65 principals with more than ten years of experience. There was no statistically significant association between these two variables. This finding suggests that principals are not more likely to select a specific walkthrough purpose based on their experience level as a principal.

Despite the lack of a statistical association between a principal's experience level and their purpose for conducting a walkthrough, it is important to note that principals with less experience utilize walkthroughs far less as an evaluative tool than principals with more experience. While principals in the survey indicated that the evaluation of teacher instruction

delivery was the most important purpose for conducting walkthroughs, the principals with less experience indicated that gathering data to guide their decision making was the second most important purpose. This may be the start of a trend amongst newly hired principals that are placing a greater focus on using walkthroughs as a means of making decisions about the school as opposed to using them as a tool for evaluation.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between the level of administrative experience of a principal and whether or not that principal shares the results of walkthroughs with teachers?

Principals selected one of three experience levels in defining their demographic and responded to a survey question asking if they share the results of their walkthroughs with teachers. While the majority of principals (72.5%) share the results with teachers, it is of interest to note that there is a clear increase in the percentage of principals who share the results with teachers as the principal's level of experience increases—from 65.1% in principals with less than five years of experience to 66.2% in principals with less than ten years of experience to 84.1% in principals with more than ten years of experience. The statistical analysis resulted in a statistically significant association between a principal's level of experience and whether or not they share the results of walkthroughs with teachers. These findings suggest that principals are more likely to share the results of their walkthroughs with teachers based on their years of experience as a principal. Principals who have been in the position for a longer amount of time may be more skilled in their ability to provide feedback to teachers and have more experience with engaging in professional discussions revolving around instructional practice. Those who are newer in the position may lack the confidence or skills to provide feedback to teachers, which

would explain why less-experienced principals are not as likely to share the results of walkthroughs with teachers.

This study has shown that the concept of instructional leadership cuts across socioeconomic levels and a principal's level of experience as it pertains to the implementation of the walkthrough process. While it is clear that walkthroughs are used for many different purposes, the most frequent is to evaluate teacher instructional delivery. The study has not made a judgement on whether principals in these school settings are in fact effective in using the walkthrough process to impact teaching and learning. Principals believe that walkthroughs should be used primarily to evaluate teacher instructional delivery.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework Synthesis

In Chapter 2, the concept of management by wandering around (MBWA) was discussed as a means of explaining how walkthroughs originated in the field of education and to explain how the conceptual framework of MBWA was intended to be used. The concept of MBWA originated in the 1970s with the Hewlett-Packard Company. The purpose of MBWA was to have company leaders go out into the workplace, talk to employees, work with them, ask questions and help support them if needed (Frase & Hertz, 1990). The Hewlett-Packard company expected their leaders to spend at least 50% of their time in the workplace working with others (Frase & Hertz, 1990). By getting out into the workplace, leaders were able to ask questions and talk to their employees to determine how best to support them in their work. Walkthroughs are one application of MBWA in the field of education. Based on the findings of this study, the majority of principals utilize walkthroughs to evaluate teacher practice. However, MBWA was originally intended as a way to communicate with and support employees within the organization in an effort to achieve greater productivity and improve the company. MBWA was not intended

by business leaders as an evaluative tool, and yet those in the field of education have utilized MBWA (through the walkthrough process) as a means of evaluating teacher practice. According to this study, the main purpose principals have for conducting walkthroughs is to evaluate teacher practice. Furthermore, Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013) also showed that only 7.7% of a principal's day is spent in classrooms or working with teachers, falling far short of the goal of 50% as prescribed by the MBWA method. While this study has shown that principals believe that the most important use of walkthroughs is to evaluate teacher instructional delivery (54.9%) and to gather data for decision making (15.4%), if MBWA was applied in the school setting according to its intended use, the most important purpose for conducting walkthroughs would be to gather data for decision making. The gathering of data can be a non-evaluative approach to the use of walkthroughs that enables the principal to utilize classroom data to support teachers in and out of the classroom. If walkthroughs were primarily used as a means of supporting teachers, one would see an improvement in school culture and teachers would be more receptive to change (Downey, 2004).

This notion of change brings us to the concept of change theory, which was discussed as the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. The sharing of walkthrough results is the first step in beginning the process of working with teachers to improve their teacher practice. People's aversion to change usually makes it very difficult to improve teacher practice. One aspect of change theory developed by Lewin (1947) deals with the importance of allowing individuals to have some input in the change process. By allowing individuals to pick solutions and methods that are aligned to their personalities, they will be less likely to resist change (Lewin, 1947). When principals share their feedback and take the time to engage with teachers in professional discussions revolving around teacher practice, teachers will view walkthroughs as non-evaluative

and as a method to support their teacher practice. Professional discussions are an opportunity for teachers and the principal to have a discussion that enables the teacher to have an equal voice in bringing about change in terms of their teacher practice. Walkthroughs are not simply an opportunity for principals to give teachers feedback, but an opportunity to discuss what was observed and what the teacher intended to occur in the lesson. It is an opportunity for teachers and the principal to ask questions and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning.

Senge's (2006) learning organizations framework introduces the notion of personal mastery, which is the idea that school leaders seek to support the professional development of all of their employees. When leaders take the time to coach teachers and have professional discussions with them after conducting walkthroughs, this sends a message to teachers that the principal is motivated to work collaboratively with teachers to support them in their teacher practice (Schein, 1999). By applying the concepts of MBWA and change theory together, leaders may be more effective in establishing a school culture that is receptive to change and that views the walkthrough process as a tool for school improvement.

Recommendations for Policy

The AchieveNJ initiative started in 2013 was one of the motivating factors behind the development of this study's problem statement. AchieveNJ's goal was to utilize instructional leadership to improve teaching and learning and thereby increase student achievement (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). However, the teacher evaluation process outlined by the AchieveNJ initiative has not proven to increase student achievement. If classroom visits and formal observations do not increase student achievement, but coaching teachers has been shown to have a positive effect on student achievement (Downey & Frase, 2001), it might be necessary to change the process of formal teacher evaluation in the state of New Jersey. Teachers

need to have an opportunity for greater participation and responsibility in improving their professional practice. A principal visiting a classroom and providing a teacher with a rating places the responsibility on the principal to improve teacher practice. It is during the post-observation discussion that the principal and teacher may have an opportunity to improve teacher practice. The post-observation conference is typically used to justify the rating and discuss techniques to improve instruction as dictated by the evidence gathered by the principal. The entire process is set up for the teacher to receive feedback and discuss the justification of the rating with the principal. The structure of the evaluation process is not always conducive to coaching, and in turn, initiating change.

The first recommendation for policy is to create an evaluation process that requires a coaching partnership to be developed between teachers and principals. Through self-assessments, professional development plans and classroom walkthroughs, teachers will develop areas where they would like to improve their classroom practice. This recommendation for policy would require walkthroughs to be specifically aligned to the teacher's areas of growth identified through their self-assessment and professional development plan. By increasing teacher input in the observation process, school principals and teachers will be working in partnership towards improving teacher practice. In many districts, principals alone determine the areas in which they want to provide feedback to teachers, and the teachers themselves have no input in this process. Oftentimes, feedback to teachers is given based on the principals' own strengths or based on school-wide improvement plans. To establish a coaching partnership between teachers and principals, walkthroughs should be used strictly as a means of coaching teachers and as an opportunity for sharing feedback with teachers in the specific areas they are seeking improvement. By identifying this purpose of conducting walkthroughs through policy, teachers

and principals will be in agreement that walkthroughs are only used to benefit and support teachers in their professional practice. It is through this transparency and the sharing of walkthrough feedback that teachers and principals will be able to establish a coaching partnership and provide more opportunities for teacher input in the improvement of teacher practice.

In terms of the evaluation process, AchieveNJ's goal was to provide teachers with more opportunities to engage in high-quality professional discussions (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). Furthermore, the desired outcome was that teachers would receive more observations and more nuanced feedback to support them in their professional practice (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). The AchieveNJ policy requires principals to be trained on the observation instrument and receive a refresher training annually. The policy makes no mention of providing training on how to provide instructional feedback towards the improvement of teacher practice. The second recommendation for policy is that AchieveNJ should require principals and those conducting observations to receive professional development training on how to provide feedback and coaching to teachers after a walkthrough or observation. Many principals lack the training and the necessary skills to provide feedback to teachers that positively impacts teaching and learning. This policy recommendation provides required professional development training to principals in order to increase their skill sets as instructional leaders.

Through the AchieveNJ initiative, post-observation conferences are required after all teacher observations. They must be face-to-face meetings for all non-tenured and one face-to-face meeting for tenured teachers (State of New Jersey Department of Education, 2015). AchieveNJ requires two to three observations a school year. The third recommendation for

policy is to decrease the number of observations required by AchieveNJ. Post-observation conferences may cause tension between the teacher and the principal, preventing the reflective conversation on teacher practice that was initially intended (Kim & Silver, 2016). If the goal was to increase the number of opportunities for high-quality professional conversations regarding teacher practice, this could be achieved through the requirement of non-evaluative post conferences. Limiting the number of evaluations that are required in the course of a school year will afford school principals more opportunities to have discussions with teachers regarding specific and individualized areas for improvement. Since walkthroughs are typically brief, usually in the five to seven minute range, principals will need to be specific in terms of the areas where they are gathering data. This targeted focus of the walkthrough will enable teachers to receive more specific and individualized coaching in specific areas of instruction.

Recommendations for Practice

The first recommendation for practice is to develop a common definition of “instructional leadership” in one’s school or district. The concept of instructional leadership differs from school to school. A clear set of expectations of what constitutes instructional leadership will help principals to align their daily activities towards being an instructional leader. The fact that 12.7% of a principal’s day is spent on instruction-related activities is a problem (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013). While the literature claims that the role of the principal has shifted from being a building manager to an instructional leader, the research does not support the notion that principals today serve as instructional leaders. Districts want their principals to be the instructional leaders of schools, but without a clear definition of what this looks like and how principals should spend their time, principals will continue to function as building managers.

School principals will benefit from a common definition of instructional leadership and a clear set of tasks that a school or district feels best fulfill their vision of instructional leadership. According to Grissom, Loeb and Master (2013), some of the main tasks associated with instructional leadership are coaching teachers, developing the educational program, evaluating teachers, conducting classroom walkthroughs and providing required and non-required professional development. While day-to-day operations are vital to the successful management of schools, principals need to have a shared understanding of the expectations for what they should be focusing on from an instructional standpoint as well.

The second recommendation for practice pertains to a principal's ability to provide instructional feedback that improves teaching and learning. As discussed earlier, having the skills and knowledge to improve teaching and learning through the use of walkthroughs and observations is vital to the role of school principals. School districts need to prioritize the development of their principals as instructional leaders. Whether organized by the school or through attendance at educational conferences or graduate courses attended by the principal, professional development on providing instructional feedback after conducting class visits is imperative. Districts are required to train principals in the use of the district approved evaluation tool, but this is where the required professional development for principals may end. Training in providing instructional feedback to teachers needs to be an integral part of the professional development of all school principals because the growth of a principal cannot end once they complete their graduate program or mentorship.

The third recommendation for practice is for principals to take the evidence gathered from the classroom walkthrough and turn that into feedback that improves a teacher's professional practice. If walkthroughs are conducted without sharing the results of the

walkthroughs with teachers, then teachers are receiving no feedback. Principals need to focus on using walkthroughs to initiate the coaching of teachers in their professional practice. The development of a school culture that is open to feedback and developing teacher practice collectively is vital if a principal wants to improve teaching through coaching. One such method of promoting walkthroughs as the stimulus to professional growth is the reflective practice approach to walkthroughs (Downey, 2004). Through the reflective practice approach, principals provide feedback to teachers after a walkthrough in the form of dialogue and reflective questions with the teacher. The goal of this approach is to have a two-way dialogue with the teacher and to ask questions that allow opportunities for the teacher to reflect on their professional practice. It is through this practice that walkthroughs shift from being an opportunity for the principal to tell teachers what they should be doing differently to an opportunity to have a professional discussion about best practices (Downey, 2004). The reflective practice approach shifts the view of walkthroughs from an evaluation tool to a process used to support teachers.

The fourth recommendation for practice is for colleges and universities to provide greater opportunities for teacher walkthroughs and observations through their educational leadership preparation programs. While many universities include a supervision course within their educational leadership programs, it is vital for universities to provide more practice and support in the areas of teacher observation and feedback writing. Many educators who are enrolled in university leadership programs typically conduct their administrative internships within the school or district where they are employed. This provides a level of convenience, but also limits the opportunity for participating in observations and walkthroughs. Many school unions do not approve of an administrator including a fellow teacher when they conduct formal or informal class visits. Furthermore, the teacher's union would not approve of an administrator having a

conversation with a non-administrator regarding the instructional practices of their colleague. To avoid this issue, universities need to ensure that educators in university leadership programs complete a certain number of their internship hours in a district they are not affiliated with for the sole purpose of conducting walkthroughs, observations and learning how to provide quality instructional feedback.

Future Research

The purpose of this study was to determine if principals' implementation of the walkthrough process is influenced by the demographic characteristics of both the school and the principal. This study specifically focused on principals' implementation of the walkthrough process in their school or district. The first recommendation for future research would be to look at school walkthroughs from the perspective of teachers. Since the literature indicates that conducting walkthroughs does not by itself improve student achievement, it would be beneficial to look at how teachers view how walkthroughs impact the coaching and feedback they receive from principals. Such a future study could be looked at qualitatively to gather teacher perceptions of the walkthrough process in terms of coaching and feedback and quantitatively to identify trends between school and principal demographics.

The second recommendation for future research would be to add an interview piece to this study. Having acquired key information from the principal survey concerning how principals implement the walkthrough process, it would be beneficial to conduct interviews with principals to further advance this study. Interviews would provide an opportunity for the researcher to ask follow-up questions. These follow-up questions would help to determine if the implementation of walkthroughs influences the effectiveness of principal coaching and the receptiveness of teachers to feedback concerning their professional practice.

The third recommendation for further research would be to provide professional training on one walkthrough model and provide coaching to teachers to determine if this model positively impacts teaching and learning. As this study highlighted the inconsistency of walkthrough methods implemented across schools, it would be beneficial to look at how one walkthrough model in particular, the reflective walkthrough model, is implemented consistently across schools to determine if it positively impacts teacher coaching and supports the improvement of teaching and learning in schools.

Instructional leadership is necessary to improve teaching and learning in schools, but this study has shown that while principals value the use of walkthroughs as an evaluative tool and a means of gathering data on what is going on in the classroom, there is still a lack of consensus about how best to use the information that is gained from walkthroughs going forward. Once the walkthrough model is seen by both teachers and principals as a means of coaching and supporting teachers, there will be a better chance of establishing sustainable school improvements in teaching and learning. Change can only occur if everyone in the school setting is receptive to change: principals need to prove their worth as instructional leaders and teachers need to develop a sense of trust in their principals. Through openness, trust and coaching, principals and teachers can establish a culture that is receptive to improving teaching and learning to the benefit of all students.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

The responders will indicate the type and size of their district. They will also indicate gender, age and years of experience.

1. Please indicate the DFG category appropriate to your district
 - a. A
 - b. B
 - c. C/D
 - d. D/E
 - e. F/G
 - f. G/H
 - g. I
 - h. J
2. Please indicate the size of your district
 - a. Less than 500 students
 - b. 500–750 students
 - c. 751–1,000 students
 - d. 1,001–1,500 students
 - e. 1,500–3,000 students
 - f. More than 3,000 students
3. Please indicate the grade levels of your school
 - a. K–3
 - b. K–6
 - c. K–12
 - d. Middle School
 - e. High School
4. Please describe your race/ethnicity
 - a. White
 - b. African-American
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native American
 - f. Other
5. Please indicate your gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
6. Years as a principal (total inclusive of other districts served)
 - a. 1–2 years
 - b. 2–5 years
 - c. 5–10 years

- d. More than 10 years

This section attempts to describe the use of the walkthrough process in your district.

7. The walkthrough process in our district is used for the following purposes (check all that apply)
 - a. To evaluate teacher instructional delivery
 - b. To monitor student behavior
 - c. To evaluate classroom climate
 - d. To assess adherence to district policies
 - e. To gather data for decision making
 - f. To evaluate principal's performance
 - g. Other purposes not listed above
8. The most frequent use of the walkthrough process in my district is (check only one)
 - a. To evaluate teacher instructional delivery
 - b. To monitor student behavior
 - c. To evaluate classroom climate
 - d. To assess adherence to district policies
 - e. To gather data for decision making
 - f. To evaluate principal's performance
 - g. Other purposes not listed above
9. The most important use of the walkthrough process in my district is (check only one)
 - a. To evaluate teacher instructional delivery
 - b. To monitor student behavior
 - c. To evaluate classroom climate
 - d. To assess adherence to district policies
 - e. To gather data for decision making
 - f. To evaluate principal's performance
 - g. Other purposes not listed above
10. The amount of time for each walkthrough is
 - a. Less than 1 minute
 - b. 1–2 minutes
 - c. 2–3 minutes
 - d. 4–5 minutes
 - e. More than 5 minutes
11. Information obtained from principal walkthroughs is aggregated into district reports
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
12. As a principal I am required to engage in walkthroughs
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

13. I engage in the walkthrough process...
- a. At least once a day
 - b. At least twice a day
 - c. More than twice a day
 - d. At least once a week
 - e. At least twice a week
 - f. More than twice a week
 - g. No prescribed amount
14. I announce in advance when I will conduct a walkthrough
- a. Yes
 - b. No
15. I share the results with my teachers after the completion of walkthroughs
- a. Yes
 - b. No
16. Teacher evaluations are based on the results of walkthroughs
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Appendix B: IRB Letter



January 30, 2019

Jason A. Marx

Dear Mr. Marx,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board office has reviewed your research proposal entitled "Demographics and the Implementation of the Principal Walkthrough" and categorized it as exempt (reflecting the intent of the new federal regulations).

Enclosed for your records is the signed Request for Approval form.

If used, Informed Consent documents and recruitment flyers are no longer stamped.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.'.

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Daniel Gutmore